

Poems before reading *The House on Mango Street*

House by Pablo Neruda

Perhaps this is the house in which I lived
 When neither I, nor earth, existed
 When everything was moon or stone or shadow
 With the still light unborn
 This stone could then have been
 My house, my windows, or my eyes.
 This granite rose recalls
 Something that lived in me, or I in it,
 A cave, a universe of dreams inside the skull:
 cup or castle, boat or birth.
 I touch the rocks tenacious thrust,
 It's bulwark pounded in the brine
 And I know that flaws of mine subsisted here,
 Wrinkled substances that surfaced
 From the depths into my soul,
 And stone I was, stone shall be, and for this
 Caress this stone that has not died for me:
 It's what I was, and shall be – the tranquility
 Of struggle stretched beyond the brink of time.

The Valley Wind by Lu Yun

Living in retirement beyond the world,
 Silently enjoying isolation,
 I pull the rope of my door tighter
 And stuff my window with roots and ferns.
 My spirit is tuned to the Spring-season:
 At the fall of the year there is autumn in my heart,
 Thus imitating cosmic changes
 My cottage becomes a Universe.

THE GUEST HOUSE-- Jelaluddin Rumi, translation by Coleman Barks

This being human is a guest house.
 Every morning a new arrival.
 A joy, a depression, a meanness,
 some momentary awareness comes
 as an unexpected visitor.
 Welcome and entertain them all!
 Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,

who violently sweep your house
 empty of its furniture,
 still, treat each guest honorably.
 He may be clearing you out
 for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice.
 meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.

Be grateful for whatever comes.
 because each has been sent
 as a guide from beyond.

Happiness by Robert Hass

Because yesterday morning from the steamy window
 we saw a pair of red foxes across the creek
 eating the last windfall apples in the rain—
 they looked up at us with their green eyes
 long enough to symbolize the wakefulness of living
 things
 and then went back to eating—

and because this morning
 when she went into the gazebo with her black pen and
 yellow pad
 to coax an inquisitive soul
 from what she thinks of as the reluctance of matter;
 I drove into town to drink tea in the café
 and write notes in a journal—mist rose from the bay
 like the luminous and indefinite aspect of intention,
 and a small flock of tundra swans
 for the second winter in a row were feeding on new
 grass
 in the soaked fields; they symbolize mystery, I
 suppose,
 they are also called whistling swans, are very white,
 and their eyes are black—

and because the tea steamed in front of me,
 and the notebook, turned to a new page,
 was blank except for a faint blue idea of order,
 I wrote: *happiness! It is December, very cold,*
we woke early this morning,
and lay in bed kissing,
our eyes squinched up like bats

Theme for English B by Langston Hughes

The instructor said,

*Go home and write
a page tonight.
And let that page come out of you?
Then, it will be true.*

I wonder if it's that simple?
I am twenty-two, colored, born in Winston-Salem.
I went to school there, then Durham, then here
to this college on the hill above Harlem.
I am the only colored student in my class.
The steps from the hill lead down into Harlem,
through a park, then I cross St. Nicholas,
Eighth Avenue, Seventh, and I come to the Y,
the Harlem Branch Y, where I take the elevator
up to my room, sit down, and write this page:

It's not easy to know what is true for you or me
at twenty-two, my age. But I guess I'm what
I feel and see and hear, Harlem, I hear you:
hear you, hear me—we two—you, me, talk on this page.
(I hear New York, too.) Me—who?
Well, I like to eat, sleep, drink, and be in love.
I like to work, read, learn, and understand life.
I like a pipe for a Christmas present,
or records—Bessie, bop, or Bach.
I guess being colored doesn't make me *not* like
the same things other folks like who are other races.
So will my page be colored that I write?

Being me, it will not be white.
But it will be
a part of you, instructor.
You are white—
yet a part of me, as I am a part of you.
That's American.
Sometimes perhaps you don't want to be a part of me.
Nor do I often want to be a part of you.
But we are, that's true!
As I learn from you,
I guess you learn from me—
although you're older—and white—
and somewhat more free.

This is my page for English B.

In My Craft or Sullen Art by Dylan Thomas

In my craft or sullen art
Exercised in the still night
When only the moon rages
And the lovers lie abed
With all their griefs in their arms, I labour by singing light
Not for ambition or bread
Or the strut and trade of charms
On the ivory stages
But for the common wages
Of their most secret heart.

Not for the proud man apart
From the raging moon I write
On these spindrift pages
Nor for the towering dead
With their nightingales and psalms
But for the lovers, their arms
Round the griefs of the ages,
Who pay no praise or wages
Nor heed my craft or art.

Sad Women by Daria Mateja Domitrovich

Sad women always get up
to make breakfast for their children,
To tell him, "have a nice day"
Sad women go to work and always do their best,
they make lunch and always sit last,
Sad women buy groceries on the way home,
make phone calls to hear someone's voice,
they are faithful to their promises,
Sad women take upon other's grief
Sad women comfort others and say
"everything will be okay",
they don't let their sadness to come out,
Sad women don't have time to be sad,
Sad women cry when lights go out..

**"All houses wherein men have
lived and died
Are haunted houses."**

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

An Apple-Gathering

by Christina Georgina Rossetti

I plucked pink blossoms from mine apple tree
 And wore them all that evening in my hair:
 Then in due season when I went to see
 I found no apples there.
 With dangling basket all along the grass
 As I had come I went the selfsame track:
 My neighbours mocked me while they saw me pass
 So empty-handed back.

Lilian and Lillas smiled in trudging by,
 Their heaped-up basket teased me like a jeer;
 Sweet-voiced they sang beneath the sunset sky,
 Their mother's home was near.

Plump Gertrude passed me with her basket full,
 A stronger hand than hers helped it along;
 A voice talked with her thro' the shadows cool
 More sweet to me than song.

Ah Willie, Willie, was my love less worth
 Than apples with their green leaves piled above?
 I counted rosiest apples on the earth
 Of far less worth than love.

So once it was with me you stooped to talk
 Laughing and listening in this very lane:
 To think that by this way we used to walk
 We shall not walk again!

I let my neighbours pass me, ones and twos
 And groups; the latest said the night grew chill,
 And hastened: but I loitered, while the dews
 Fell fast I loitered still.

The Myth of Innocence

by Louise Glück

One summer she goes into the field as usual
 stopping for a bit at the pool where she often
 looks at herself, to see
 if she detects any changes. She sees
 the same person, the horrible mantle
 of daughterliness still clinging to her.

The sun seems, in the water, very close.
 That's my uncle spying again, she thinks—
 everything in nature is in some way her relative.
 I am never alone, she thinks,
 turning the thought into a prayer.
 Then death appears, like the answer to a prayer.

No one understands anymore
 how beautiful he was. But Persephone remembers.
 Also that he embraced her, right there,
 with her uncle watching. She remembers
 sunlight flashing on his bare arms.

This is the last moment she remembers clearly.
 Then the dark god bore her away.

She also remembers, less clearly,
 the chilling insight that from this moment
 she couldn't live without him again.

The girl who disappears from the pool
 will never return. A woman will return,
 looking for the girl she was.

She stands by the pool saying, from time to time,
 I was abducted, but it sounds
 wrong to her, nothing like what she felt.
 Then she says, I was not abducted.
 Then she says, I offered myself, I wanted
 to escape my body. Even, sometimes,
 I willed this. But ignorance

cannot will knowledge. Ignorance
 wills something imagined, which it believes exists.

All the different nouns—
 she says them in rotation.
 Death, husband, god, stranger.
 Everything sounds so simple, so conventional.
 I must have been, she thinks, a simple girl.

She can't remember herself as that person
 but she keeps thinking the pool will remember
 and explain to her the meaning of her prayer
 so she can understand
 whether it was answered or not.

Guilt by e e cummings

guilt is the cause of more disorders
than history's most obscene
marorders [marauders]

The Deserted House

by Alfred Lord Tennyson

Life and Thought have gone away
Side by side,
Leaving door and windows wide.
Careless tenants they!

All within is dark as night:
In the windows is no light;
And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before.

Close the door; the shutters close;
Or through the windows we shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark deserted house.

Come away: no more of mirth
Is here or merry-making sound.
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.

Come away: for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell;
But in a city glorious –
A great and distant city -have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have stayed with us!

Stations | Audre Lorde

Some women love
to wait
for life for a ring
in the June light for a touch
of the sun to heal them for another
woman's voice to make them whole
to untie their hands
put words in their mouths
form to their passages sound
to their screams for some other sleeper
to remember their future their past.

Some women wait for their right
train in the wrong station
in the alleys of morning
for the noon to holler
the night come down.

Some women wait for love
to rise up
the child of their promise
to gather from earth
what they do not plant
to claim pain for labor
to become
the tip of an arrow to aim
at the heart of now
but it never stays.

Some women wait for visions
That do not return
Where they were not welcome
Naked
For invitations to places
They always wanted
To visit
To be repeated.

Some women wait for themselves
Around the next corner
And call the empty spot peace
But the opposite of living
Is only not living
And the stars do not care.

Some women wait for something
To change and nothing
Does change
So they change

Themselves.

This Must Be the Place (Naive Melody) Song by Talking Heads

Home is where I want to be
Pick me up and turn me round
I feel numb - born with a weak heart
I guess I must be having fun
The less we say about it the better
Make it up as we go along
Feet on the ground
Head in the sky
It's ok I know nothing's wrong... nothing

Hi yo I got plenty of time
Hi yo you got light in your eyes
And you're standing here beside me
I love the passing of time
Never for money
Always for love
Cover up and say goodnight... say good
night

Home - is where I want to be
But I guess I'm already there
I come home - she lifted up her wings
I guess that this must be the place
I can't tell one from another
Did I find you, or you find me?
There was a time
Before we were born
If someone asks, this where I'll be...
where I'll be

Hi yo
We drift in and out
Hi yo...

**You leave home to seek
your fortune and, when
you get it, you go home
and share it with your
family.**

Anita Baker

**Every day is a journey,
and the journey itself
is home.**

Matsuo Basho